

GEOL 102 (HISTORICAL GEOLOGY)

Course Introduction

Catalog Description of Historical Geology: Earth's history, including dating methods, origin and evolution of oceans, atmosphere, lithosphere, and life. This course satisfies requirements for a general education course and is writing-enhanced*. There are no prerequisites for this course.

* LiveText Membership: participation in this course requires that you possess a membership in LiveText. Memberships may be purchased through the bookstore and activated by going online to www.livetext.com. This membership belongs to you and may be used for other courses at McNeese and for your own educational needs. If you already have a LiveText membership, you do not need to purchase another one.

A major aim of this course is to provide you with an overview of the long and complex history of change in the physical and biological aspects of our planet so that you may develop an increased appreciation for our planet and its inhabitants in a larger time context than the purely human one.

Another aim of this course is to satisfy part of the physical science component of the University's core curriculum general education requirements. As a general education course, the LA Board of Regents requires that GEOL 102 must include the assessment of at least one of its general education competencies. Competency #4, understand numerical data and statistics, and competency #5, understanding scientific method, will be assessed in GEOL 102. Within competency #4, the focus will be on the numerical data associated with radiometric dating. Within competency #5, the focus will be on drawing sound geohistorical conclusions from empirical data. Information on how these things will be assessed is included in the chart of desired student learning outcomes at the end of this document.

Course Topics

The major blocks of instruction in GEOL 102 focus on: (1) basic principles and methods of inferring past events and determining their timing, (2) summarizing and considering possible explanations of major physical events such as continental drift movements and mountain-building, and (3) summarizing and considering possible explanations of appearances and disappearances of major biological groups as indicated by the fossil record. Each block of instruction will be followed by a test.

Specific desired student learning outcomes (SLOs) are given in a chart at the end of this syllabus or in a separate file. This chart will tell you what you are expected to know and be able to do by the end of the course and also provides information on how that knowledge and those abilities are to be assessed (measured).

Course Rules & Information

1. Grade Importance If your grade in this course is critical for your future athletic eligibility, student teaching, maintaining a scholarship, etc., I expect you to be thinking about and working towards the grade you need for the entire semester. Do not try to make it MY problem by telling me about it for the first time just before or just after the final exam.

2. Textbook The textbook required for this course is stocked in the bookstore under the course number GEOL 102. Not every chapter will be assigned as reading and some chapters and sections of chapters may be considered out of order.
3. Attendance & Participation It is required and expected that you will attend ALL class meetings and participate in those meetings in helpful ways. It is also expected that you will work diligently and responsibly on any assignments given to you and turn them in on time.
4. Expected Behavior I expect you to make every effort to avoid disruptive behavior in class, including being late or having to leave early. Turn cell phones or beepers off while in class or set them to vibrate rather than make noise. I also expect you to do your own work on assignments and tests. (See www.mcneese.edu/integrity for further information on the academic honesty policy.)
5. Tests & Grading Normally, three or four tests are given during the semester and a comprehensive final examination is given at the end. Each test will count equally towards your final grade. Term-grades of A, B, C, D, & F will normally be given on the basis of term-average grade cutoff scores of 90, 80, 70, & 60%. At my discretion these may be lowered, for example if your final exam scores are very good.

Most test questions are generally of short-answer types (including fill-ins, multiple-choice, matching, true/false). Some questions will test higher-order thinking skills, not just simple recall from memory and, because science emphasizes precision and subtle reasoning, some test questions will require careful and intelligent reading.

As a designated writing-enhanced course, at least 20% of your course grade will depend on satisfactory performance on writing assignments. These may include summaries of articles, critiques of geohistorical ideas, and/or reflective writings.

6. Absence Policy Absences for which make-ups or other accommodation will automatically be provided include severe illness or death in the immediate family, natural disasters, and participation in certain University activities such as athletic contests, concerts, debates, etc. Make-ups for all other reasons, including non-emergency medical appointments, will be at my discretion. Unless you can take a make-up test before I give the graded tests back to the rest of the class, your make up will usually consist of the appropriate final exam section.

In accordance with McNeese policy (see MSU website), students with unexcused absences totaling 10% of the total number of class meetings (typically 45) or with absences of any kind totaling 40% or more of the total number of class meetings will be withdrawn from the course with a grade of WN. (For a course with 45 class meetings, 5 absences would exceed 10% of the meetings and 18 absences would equal 40%.)

ALL absences and missed deadlines MUST be explained in writing within three days of your return. The explanation should be on a full 8 1/2 x 11-inch sheet of paper. A form will be provided on Blackboard which you can print out and turn in.

If you do miss class, it is YOUR responsibility to obtain any missed notes and find out about any upcoming assignments, quizzes, etc. I expect that my students will be helpful to each other in providing notes and information and I also expect that borrowers of notes will return them promptly and in good condition.

7. Special Situations or Problems

Students with Disabilities It is each student's responsibility to register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities when requesting an accommodation. Any student with a disability is encouraged to contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, Drew Hall, Room 200, (337) 475-5916 Voice, (337) 475-5878 FAX, (337) 562-4227 TDD/TTY, Hearing Impaired. 475-5722.

A student with a disability is responsible for locating the designated emergency exits, the areas of refuge in a classroom building, and is encouraged to develop and discuss the evacuation plan with the faculty member.

Diversity Policy For information about diversity awareness and sexual harassment policies and procedures, students should visit the MSU web page at <http://www.mcneese.edu/policy/docs/Non-Discrimination%20Policy%20Revised%20%209-16-08.pdf>

Fire Drills McNeese State University will periodically conduct fire drills. In the event of a fire drill or a related building emergency, all persons in a classroom are required to exit the building using posted escape routes or the Area of Refuge for individuals with disabilities.